

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

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UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 1427

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SUBJECT: ARGENTINE REACTION TO U.S. PRESSURE ON PORTIONS
OF BRAZIL-FRG NUCLEAR AGREEMENT AND ARGENTINE NU-
CLEAR PROGRAM ACCORDING TO CNEA PRESIDENT CASTRO
MADERO

1. LA NACION OF FEB. 16 CARRIED REPORT OF EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH CNEA PRESIDENT, REAR ADMIRAL CARLOS CASTRO MADERO,
GRANTED SOME DAYS EARLIER. RE THE BRAZIL-FRG AGREEMENT,
CASTRO MADERO STATED "ARGENTINA IS IN SOLIDARITY WITH BRAZIL
CONCERNING THE UTILIZATION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. MOREOVER, THE
RISK OF PRODUCING ATOMIC WEAPONS IS DISCARDED, AND OUR COUN-
TRY IS MORE ADVANCED THAN BRAZIL IN THE UTILIZATION OF NU-
CLEAR ENERGY AND POSSESSES URANIUM RESERVES WHICH ARE ASSU-
RED FOR LIFE." HE WENT ON TO SAY "THE SOLIDARITY WITH BRA-
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ZIL IS FOUNDED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT IN THAT MATERIAL THE
RISK THAT THOSE MEANS ARE DESTINED FOR FABRICATION OF NUC-
LEAR WEAPONS IS COVERED." "HOWEVER", CASTRO MADERO WENT ON
"THAT IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR THE COUNTRIES WHICH LEAD IN
NUCLEAR ENERGY, WHICH WISH OR SEEK THAT BRAZIL NOT HAVE
AT ITS DISPOSAL THE PART DESTINED FOR ENRICHMENT IN THE FUEL
CYCLE, BECAUSE THAT COULD PROVIDE A CAPABILITY TO FABRICATE

NUCLEAR BOBS. THEN, THEY INTEND THAT THAT PART OF THE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER NOT BE EFFECTED."

2. REST OF INTERVIEW WAS DEVOTED TO ARGENTINE PLANS IN NUCLEAR FIELD, ADDING LITTLE NEW TO WHAT HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN STATED. THE FUEL ELEMENT FABRICATION PLANT IS SCHEDULED FOR 1979 COMPLETION, AND THE HEAVY WATER PILOT PLANT FOR 1980. A PILOT PLANT FOR ZIRCALOY TUBE PRODUCTION IS SCHEDULED TO OPERATE IN 1978, ALONG WITH A PILOT PLANT FOR PRODUCTION OF ZIRCONIUM SPONGE.

3. CASTRO MADERO REITERATED THE STATEMENT IN HIS ESTRATEGIA ARTICLE (BUENOS AIRES 1011) THAT BY THE YEAR 2000 THERE WILL HAVE ACCUMULATED SO MUCH PLUTONIUM IN SPENT FUEL THAT IT WILL REPRESENT AN ENERGY SOURCE GREATER THAN ALL THE COUNTRY'S FOSSIL FUEL RESERVES.

4. CNEA HAS RAISED PROFESSIONAL SALAIRES TO THE POINT THAT THE TOP STAFF NOW RECEIVED 285,000 PESOS (US\$947) MONTHLY, AND THE MINIMUM SALARY IS 90,000 (US\$299). THESE ARE STILL BELOW WHAT PRIVATE INDUSTRY PAYS, HOWEVER, CASTRO MADERO CONCEDED.

5. TO THE INEVITABLE QUESTION OF WHETHER ARGENTINA IS "IN CONDITIONS" TO FABRICATE THE ATOMIC BOMB, THE CNEA PRESIDENT SAID "THE COMMISSION IS DEDICATED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE PEACEFUL APPLICATION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. AND I REITERATE THAT IT CONCENTRATES ITS GREATEST EFFORTS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF CENTRAL STATIONS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ENERGY, WHICH IS ONE OF THE HIGH-UNCLASSIFIED

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HEST NATIONAL PRIORITIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ATOMIC BOMB NOT ONLY IS NOT IN THE PLANS OF THE COMMISSION, BUT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A NATIONAL OBJECTIVE."

6. WITH RESPECT TO FUTURE APPLICATIONS OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, CASTRO MADERO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPULSION, MEDICINE, INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS, ETC., AS WELL AS THE NEED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND THE ENVIRONMENT FROM POSSIBLE NOXIOUS EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR ORIGIN.

7. COMMENT: CASTRO MADERO CHOSE HIS WORDS CAREFULLY, BUT THERE IS AN IMPLICATION OF SOME KIND OF PENDING AGREEMENT WITH BRAZIL TO PRECLUDE NUCLEAR WEAPONS MANUFACTURE. CHAPLIN

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